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Education,  
Employment and the Economy

Young Professionals Association  
of Louisville  
February 17, 2012

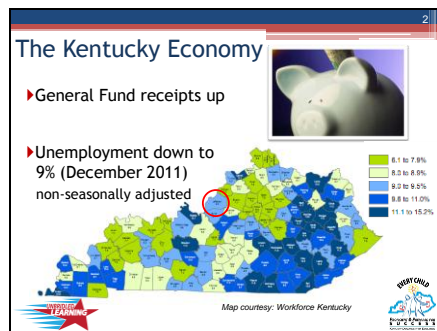
Terry Holliday, Ph.D.  
Kentucky Education Commissioner

UNISOLED  
LEARNING  
College/Career Readiness for All

EVERY CHILD  
Progress & Learning  
Success

Good afternoon.

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I probably don't have to tell you, that even though we're making progress, the economy nationwide and here in Kentucky still has not completely recovered from the Great Recession.

The good news for the commonwealth is that **general fund receipts are up**, buoyed primarily by sales and property tax receipts in January. And **unemployment is down** to a non-seasonally adjusted rate of 8.6% in December 2011 -- 9 % in Jefferson County -- still high but moving in the right direction.

From most indications, Kentucky is well poised to emerge stronger and more competitive than ever before.

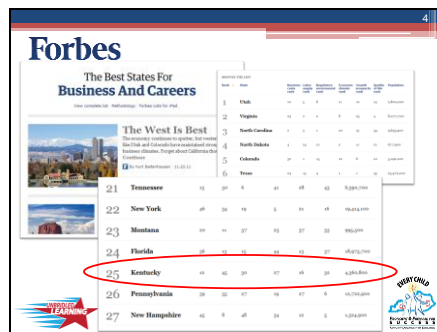
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According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Report, *Enterprising States*, Kentucky's lowest cost of living in the nation helps move it into this year's top ten for taxes and regulation; the state has also clocked in as the 12th fastest for job growth over the past two years.

The report goes on to say, "this is independent recognition of the strategic and sound approaches the state has taken to rebuilding its economy."

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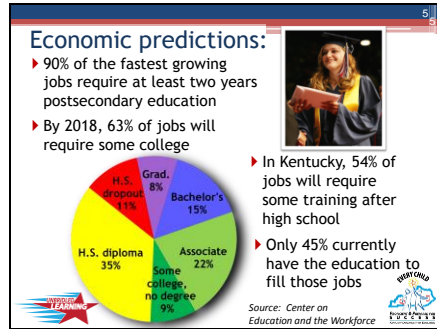


A recent *Forbes Magazine* Best States for Business list corroborates that positive business climate -- with Kentucky moving up 19 spots -- from 44th in 2008 to 25th this year. The state earned high marks for the relatively low cost of doing business and growth prospects.

Yet, a single indicator seemed to hold Kentucky back -- in this study, we ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in labor supply which measures college and high school attainment.

In the race to economic recovery, we're out of the gate strong. But will we stumble before reaching the finish line?

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According to the U.S. Labor Department, 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs in America require at least two years of postsecondary education.

By 2018 it is predicted that 63 percent of all jobs will require some college, an Associate, Bachelor's or graduate degree.

54 percent of all jobs (1.1 million) in Kentucky will require some training beyond high school.

- 8 percent will require a graduate degree
- 15 percent a Bachelor's degree
- 22 percent an associates degree
- And about 9 percent some college, but no degree.




- Yet currently only 45 percent of Kentucky's population has the education (some college or above) that will be required to fill those jobs.

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### Many students are unprepared for the future

- ▶ A third of all students do not finish high school
- ▶ Up to half who do graduate, lack the advanced literacy and math skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education or the workforce

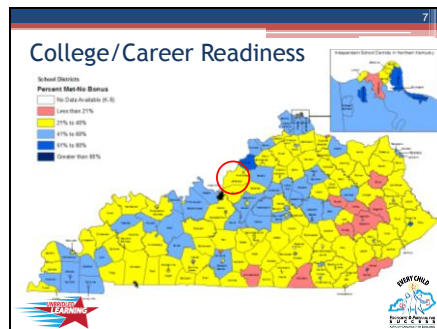


And while today's students are the workers of tomorrow, many of THEM are unprepared for the future they face.

Nationwide, a third of all students do not finish high school.

Up to half of those who DO graduate lack the advanced literacy and math skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.

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In Kentucky, only 38 percent of our students are prepared for college/career.

On the map, the blues show those districts with the highest percentage of students who are prepared, the pinks those that are least prepared -- based on ACT scores, college placement tests or students meeting career-ready academic or technical benchmarks.

In Jefferson County, 33 percent are considered college/career ready.

We have to do better.

Kentucky's future economic health depends on a well-educated workforce. New academic standards, along with our push to ensure college and career

readiness for all students, will help the state improve student achievement and graduation rates and provide students with the skills they need to be successful after high school.

The support of the business community is crucial in this work, and we need local chambers of commerce to serve as the standard-bearers for our efforts.

If Kentucky is to remain globally competitive and if our citizens are to enjoy a comfortable standard of living, we can no longer just focus on employment and the economy, but must also focus on the third “e” – education.

We have to find a way to keep kids in school and on target for college/career readiness.

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Our Vision:



Every child proficient and prepared for success




Our vision is: Every child -- every child, proficient and prepared for success – success is defined as college **and/or** career ready.




We recognize that not all students will go to college -- but hopefully **will** pursue some OTHER postsecondary training.

**College/Career Ready**

**College Ready:** the level of preparation a first-time student needs in order to succeed in a credit-bearing course at a postsecondary institution. *Succeed* is defined as completing entry-level courses at a level of understanding and proficiency that prepares the student for subsequent courses.



**Career Ready:** the level of preparation a high school graduate needs in order to proceed to the next step in a chosen career, whether that is postsecondary coursework, industry certification, or entry into the workforce.



In the 21st century, being college- and/or career-ready means students are well rounded and can actively participate in a democratic society as informed citizens, critical thinkers and innovators. It is critical that the educational system engage and motivate each student to be prepared for meaningful work and citizenship.

We define:

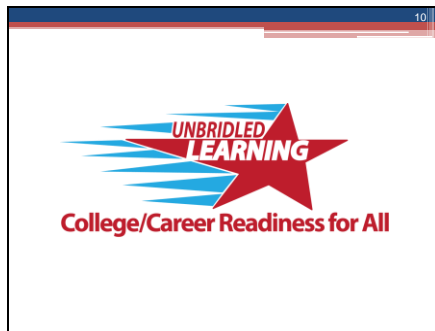
**College Ready:** the level of preparation a first-time student needs in order to succeed in a credit-bearing course at a postsecondary institution. In this case, *succeed* is defined as completing entry-level courses at a level of understanding and proficiency that prepares the student for subsequent courses.

**Career Ready:** the level of preparation a high school graduate needs in order to proceed to the next step in a chosen career, whether that is postsecondary coursework, industry certification, or entry into the workforce.

According to the Association of Career and Technical Education, career readiness includes core academic skills and the ability to apply those skills to concrete situations in order to function in the workplace and in routine daily activities; employability skills, such as critical thinking and responsibility, that are essential in any career area; and technical, job-specific skills related to a specific career pathway.

So now we know what we're aiming for – the question becomes how do we get there?

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Our plan is called Unbridled Learning and the focus is College/Career Readiness for ALL.

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At the heart of the plan: Senate Bill 1 -- passed by the 2009 General Assembly. It provided the roadmap for transforming public education in Kentucky – a roadmap for Unbridled Learning.

Senate Bill 1 established an aggressive readiness agenda.

Briefly, the legislation called for:

- New, more rigorous academic standards aligned with college entry requirements

- New assessments based on those

standards

- Program Reviews in Arts & Humanities, Practical Living/Career Studies and Writing, to encourage high-quality programs and plentiful student learning opportunities in these areas.
- Improved professional development including strategies to support implementation of the new standards and assessment literacy, among others.
- A new balanced and more relevant accountability system that holds students, teachers, principals, schools and districts accountable for progress
- Developing a unified plan for improving college/career readiness in cooperation with the Council on Postsecondary Education

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New Academic Standards

CCSSO Council of Chief State School Officers

NGA Center for BEST PRACTICES

▶ EPSB, KBE, CPE unanimously adopted the new English/LA and mathematics standards -- making Kentucky first in the nation to do so

▶ Internationally benchmarked

▶ Aligned across all levels - elementary, middle, high and postsecondary

KENTUCKY

With a charge to develop new standards, we wasted no time in joining the Common Core Standards Initiative, a national coalition coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

- In February 2010, the Education Professional Standards Board, Kentucky Board of Education and Council for Postsecondary Education unanimously adopted the new English/Language arts and mathematics standards making Kentucky the first in the nation to do so. This is significant for several

reasons – it signaled a new cooperative spirit and shared vision among the three entities AND placed Kentucky among the leaders nationwide in education reform once again. Since then 44 states and the District of Columbia have followed suit and adopted the Common Core Standards.


- The new standards are internationally benchmarked, which should make our students more competitive globally.

- They are to be aligned across all levels – from elementary, to high school to college so students can be successful at each educational level.

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### New Standards



- ▶ Clearly state what students are expected to learn and when
- ▶ More rigorous and relevant

- ▶ Fewer in number but require a deeper level of understanding
- ▶ Kentucky Core Academic Standards taught and assessed for the first time in 2011-12 school year



- The new standards clearly state what students are expected to learn and when.

- They are more rigorous, more relevant and aligned to today's college and workplace demands with many 21<sup>st</sup> century skills embedded within.

- And there aren't as many of them so they can be taught to a deeper level of understanding.

Students will need to use more critical thinking and learn concepts more in depth than they have before.

- The Kentucky Core Academic Standards in English/LA and Mathematics, as they are now known, are being taught and assessed for the first time in the current school year – again making Kentucky among the first,

if not the first in the nation to do so.

A word of warning here, because the new standards are more rigorous and since students haven't had that same level of rigor leading up to this year, there is a potential for student performance drop temporarily in the short term. When and if that happens, we need you to help us stand firm in support of the new standards with the realization that it will be best for Kentucky in the long term.

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Kentucky is also being recognized nationally for the method by which it is providing support and professional development to effectively implement the new standards -- Regional Leadership Networks.




The vision is that we build capacity for excellence at the local level – that every district in the state has a knowledgeable and cohesive leadership team that guides the professional learning and practice of all administrators, teachers and staff in the district so that every student experiences highly effective teaching, learning and assessment practices in every classroom, every day.

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### New Assessments

- ▶ Aligned with new standards
- ▶ Balanced
  - Formative to inform instruction
  - Summative to measure teaching and learning
- ▶ Multiple choice and open response
- ▶ Benchmarked to performance standards; provide longitudinal data and comparisons with national norms



The second major requirement of Senate Bill 1 was to develop and implement new assessments.

- They had to be aligned with the new standards and curriculum.

- They must be balanced including formative, interim and summative assessments.

- Formative assessments throughout the school year gauge a student's progress and inform instruction.

- End of the year or end-of-course summative assessments measure the effectiveness of both teaching and learning.


- New state assessments will include multiple choice as well as open response questions.

- The assessments are to be benchmarked to performance standards; provide longitudinal profiles for students; and provide comparisons with national norms.



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### New Assessments



- ▶ Assessment FOR learning to refine teaching and learning at classroom level
- ▶ Measure and identify gaps and implement interventions
- ▶ K-PREP tests will be administered in a five-day window within the last 14 days of a district's instructional calendar



We are also emphasizing assessment FOR learning in order to provide diagnostic information that identifies student strengths and weaknesses in the content areas and enables teachers to improve instruction and provide appropriate interventions or enrichment.

The new assessments will also allow us to measure and identify gaps and implement interventions aimed at reducing them.

The state assessments, which will be known as K-PREP tests – which stands for Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress -- will be given in a five-day window within the last 14 days of a district's

# instructional calendar.

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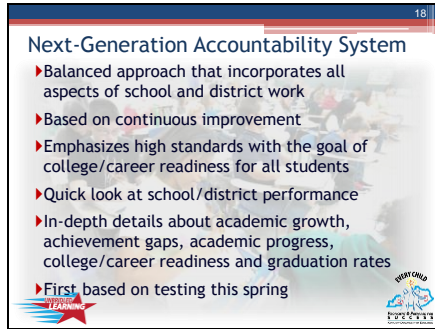
Testing for the 2011-12 School Year						
GRADE	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	EPAS
3	✓		K-PREP			
4	✓	Edt./Mech.	K-PREP	✓		
5	✓	On-demand	✓		✓	
6	✓	Edt./Mech. and On-demand	✓			
7	✓		✓	✓		
8	✓	On-demand	✓		✓	EXPLORE
9						
10	End-of-Course English II	On-demand	End-of-Course Algebra II	End-of-Course Biology	End-of-Course U.S. History	PLAN (Used to meet required testing of editing/mechanics)
11		On-demand				ACT
12						

As in the past, Kentucky's public school students will be tested each year in a variety of subjects – reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writing.

Middle and high school students will also take EXPLORE, PLAN and the ACT to assess college readiness and identify areas where they may need additional instruction.

High school students will also take end-of-course exams in English 2, Algebra 2, Biology and U.S. History. Other end-of-course assessments will be added in subsequent years. And in an effort to increase student accountability end-of-course exams will count at least 20 percent of a student's final course grade. If they don't, the district will have to explain why not.

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### Next-Generation Accountability System

- ▶ Balanced approach that incorporates all aspects of school and district work
- ▶ Based on continuous improvement
- ▶ Emphasizes high standards with the goal of college/career readiness for all students
- ▶ Quick look at school/district performance
- ▶ In-depth details about academic growth, achievement gaps, academic progress, college/career readiness and graduation rates
- ▶ First based on testing this spring

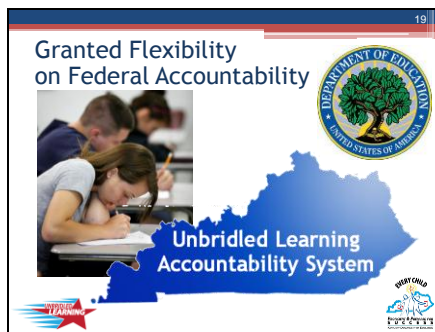
UPPER MERIDIAN  
KENTUCKY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Of course all those tests will feed into the state's new accountability system.

Kentucky's Next-Generation accountability model:

- Takes a balanced approach that incorporates all aspects of school and district work
- Is based on continuous improvement
- Emphasizes high standards with the goal of college/career readiness for all students
- Provides a quick look at school/district performance
- Includes in-depth details about academic growth, achievement gaps, academic progress, college/career readiness and graduation rates
- First based on testing this spring

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### Granted Flexibility on Federal Accountability

Unbridled Learning Accountability System

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As you are probably aware, the U.S. Department of Education recently granted Kentucky flexibility on No Child Left Behind. We are one of the first states to receive such consideration.

What that means is that instead of two accountability models – state and federal, now we will have just one – Kentucky's Unbridled Learning Accountability System – focused on the goal of college- and career- readiness for all our students.

The federal waiver means that we will be able to focus our resources on the areas of greatest need and challenge our students and educators with continuous improvement.

This DOES NOT mean we are giving up on our minority students. Quite the contrary.

After spending two years developing our system and getting feedback from a variety of stakeholders, we feel the Kentucky system is fairer, balanced and takes into consideration measures beyond just student achievement.

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It also includes student academic growth, graduation rate, readiness for college/career and includes a measure on closing achievement gaps – on which schools will have to show progress. That's the Next Generation Learners component that started this school year.

In the 2012-13 school year, the Next-Generation Instructional Programs and Support kicks in. This includes Program Reviews (mandated by Senate Bill 1) in:

- Arts and Humanities
- Practical Living/Vocational Studies and
- Writing
- additional Program review areas will likely be included in upcoming years

Program Reviews are designed to focus on instructional improvements.

The goal is to ensure access for quality programs in these areas.

While schools will be conducting Program Reviews this

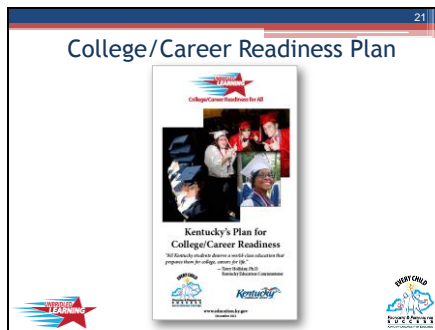
School year, they won't be included in

the accountability model until the following school year.

And the last to come on line will be Next-Generation Professionals. This will include measures of:  
Effective Teachers and Leaders and will be tied to our Professional Growth and Evaluation System that is currently in development.

This will help ensure quality teachers in all of our classrooms and effective leaders in all of our schools.

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And that brings us full circle, back to the issue of College/Career Readiness.


As required by Senate Bill 1, we have developed a plan and in the process identified some specific strategies to increase college/career readiness:

You can find them detailed in this brochure (hold up brochure). I have some copies and it's available on the Unbridled Learning page of the KDE website

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## Unbridled Learning



**Target Goals:**

- ▶ Increase the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate from 76% to 90% by 2015
- ▶ Increase the percentage of students who are college/career ready from 34% to 67% by 2015



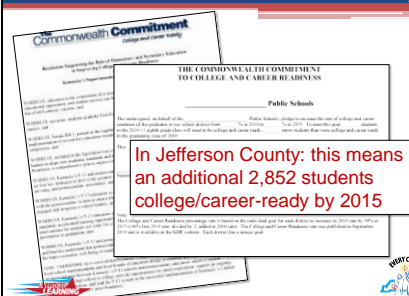
We have established some target goals to keep us moving forward with an eye toward College/Career Readiness for ALL:

▶ **Increase the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate from 76% to 90% by 2015**


▶ **Increase the percentage of students who are college/career ready from 34% to 67% by 2015**

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**In Jefferson County: this means an additional 2,852 students college/career-ready by 2015**




In support of these goals, I asked all our superintendents and board of education chairs to sign a pledge -- the Commonwealth Commitment -- a vow to improve the readiness rate in their high schools by 50 percent by 2015.

I'm pleased to report, Jefferson County has signed on -- in fact we have 100 percent support statewide.

To meet this goal, in Jefferson County this means you will need to ensure an additional 2,852 students are college-/career-ready by 2015.

But this isn't just a job for the schools. Businesses and communities must be involved.


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▶ Joint effort of KDE and the Department of Workforce Development in collaboration with various education partners

▶ MISSION: Focus attention on the importance of planning for college and/or career by engaging students, parents, schools and communities in the process of effective advising

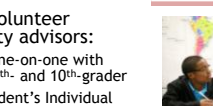


Operation Preparation supports the advising process -- one of our college/career ready strategies, and will help focus students on preparing for their future.

The governor has proclaimed March 12-16 as Operation Preparation, College/Career Readiness Advising Week. It's a joint effort of the Kentucky Department of Education and Department of Workforce Development in collaboration with many of our education partners.

The mission? Focus attention on the importance of planning for college and/or career by engaging students, parents, schools and communities in the process of effective advising.



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**Trained volunteer community advisors:**

- ▶ meet one-on-one with every 8<sup>th</sup>- and 10<sup>th</sup>-grader
- ▶ use student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP), EXPLORE/PLAN results to discuss:
  - ✓ career aspirations and required education/training
  - ✓ whether the student is on target to meet his/her goals
  - ✓ whether student is taking the courses recommended to prepare them for a successful future
- ▶ Jefferson County Contact:
  - Heather Gray
  - [heather.gray@jefferson.kyschools.us](mailto:heather.gray@jefferson.kyschools.us)
  - (502)-485-6103

In the original design we wanted:

Trained volunteer community advisors to meet one-on-one with every 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade student and using the student's Individual Learning Plan, EXPLORE or PLAN results discuss with the student:

- his or her career aspirations and required education or training;
- whether the student is on target to meet his/her goals, and
- whether the student is taking the courses recommended to prepare him or her for a successful future.

I understand Jefferson County is adopting a little different model -- but the goal is the same – to provide inspiration, information and academic

preparation for students so they may become college/career ready by the time they graduate from high school.

Heather Gray is the Operation Preparation contact person for Jefferson County. I would encourage you to contact her to see how you could become involved in Operation Preparation or other school activities that support our students becoming college/career ready.

While most of you aren't parents yet, when you do become a parent, I would implore you to be involved in your child's education and in his or her school. It can make a HUGE difference. Parents are the first and most important teacher in a child's life.

Our teachers, our counselors and our principals need support from parents and our communities to ensure students graduate ready to take that next step in life.

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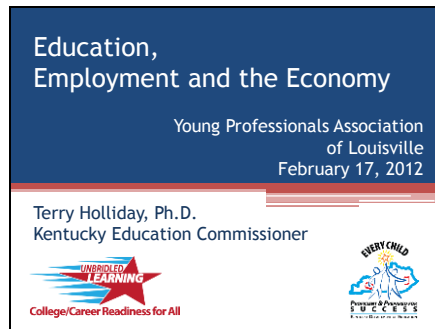
So there you have it: Unbridled Learning, Kentucky's plan for college/career readiness for ALL.

Keeping kids in school. Preparing them to be college/career ready. Ensuring a well-trained workforce.

It's the right thing to do for our kids. It's the right thing to do for our state.

With your help and support we can make it happen and we all will benefit....

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**UNBROKEN LEARNING**  
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...through improved education,  
expanded employment and a robust  
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